



2022 STATE OF LEAD GENERATION

Orgs Turn To Hybrid Channels, Credible Digital Engagements To Accelerate Lead Gen Efforts



INTRODUCTION

Lead generation blends the physical and digital worlds, even though it primarily operated in the latter for the past two years. However, as intermission ends and the curtain gently reopens on in-person gatherings, the world of lead gen is shifting once again and challenging marketers to cohesively target prospects across both in-person and digital channels.

“I think that the disruption of Covid-19 bred this really innovative approach to thinking about things,” said Lydia Flocchini, CMO of [SurePoint Technologies](#), a provider of financial and practice management software. “We had to be very entrepreneurial and disruptive and think of completely new ways of marketing through digital channels.”

With [63% of marketers](#) ranking lead generation as their No. 1 challenge, marketing teams are rethinking their targeting strategies to reach buyers where they are. The door is wide open for innovative and creative lead generation approaches. This report will spotlight the most effective ways to drive and score new leads and re-engage old ones, with specific topics of discussion with industry leaders that include:

- The most successful lead generation channels and the best strategies to maximize engagement on each one;
- How to humanize the lead generation process beyond form fills and into targeted outreach campaigns;
- The must-have platforms, technologies and strategies assisting marketing teams in their lead scoring and generation efforts, including automation and ABM; and
- Real-world examples and thought leadership content to provide context and guidance.



EVENTS, SOCIAL MEDIA KEY LEAD GEN CHANNELS IN POST-COVID WORLD

It may be nostalgia; it may be cabin fever. Whatever the reason, there's palpable excitement for returning to trade shows and live events this year — **83% of Americans** working from home say they miss in-person meetings and conventions. Despite renewed enthusiasm for face-to-face gatherings, virtual events are still a major factor in B2B lead generation. And it appears they will remain so throughout 2022, as **51% of marketers** invested in virtual events in 2021 and 80% plan to invest the same budget or more into virtual events in 2022.

Digital channels have only grown in importance for lead generation over the past two years, and there are no signs of that trend subsiding. Email and social media are still powerful channels, as B2B decision makers have become more accustomed to interacting digitally, from mainstays like Twitter and Instagram to newer kids on the block like Clubhouse and TikTok. In fact, **67% of marketers** plan to increase their investment in TikTok in 2022.

"People are talking about TikTok, and I know people who've had success with Facebook," said Michael Phelan, Principal and Founder of **Go-to-Market Pros**. "But for me, LinkedIn is the main way to reach out, connect with folks in the industry and get them interested in new concepts and new programs."

Although the more "professional" channels will remain a mainstay as **93% of marketers** use LinkedIn for organic social marketing, marketers are exploring other avenues such as content gates and new channels.

"What's working for us is paid social and gated content," added Straetz. "We've also seen an unusual strengthening trend on Reddit. We're seeing a lot of our content being shared and a lot of engagement there. That's kind of a dark horse I wouldn't have guessed."



HOW TO ENGAGE WITH BUYING COMMITTEES ON THEIR OWN TERMS

with Zach Jones, CRO of Technology Advice

Engaging B2B buyers was never an easy task, but the complexities of the digital era added several new hoops for marketing teams to jump through. With more resources than ever at their fingertips, buying committees are independently searching for solutions and want to meet with vendors on their own terms.

Marketers need to get out in front of these committees and supply them with the information they want – sometimes even before they know they want it. To get more insights into engaging buying committees, we sat down with Zach Jones, CRO of [TechnologyAdvice](#), to dive deeper into the behaviors of modern buyers.

Demand Gen Report: What are the trends you're seeing in the B2B tech space in 2022?

Zach Jones: For B2B buyers and buying committees, we're seeing a great deal of complexity. Regardless of the type of product or service they're researching, there are dozens of options available. And once a buyer is on a vendor's radar, they're going to see a steady stream of outreach. The buyers want to do their due diligence and make an informed decision, but the number of products and messages they see can really complicate the process.

We're also seeing buyers take control of the buying process and apply the principles of B2C markets – such as preferences for on-demand streaming and viewing – to it. B2B buyers want to conduct independent research at their own pace, and they want to do it digitally. If you're a B2B marketer, that means you need to go to the trusted resources where they do that research and meet them there before they narrow down their list and exclude your brand.

DGR: What are some of the most common mistakes you see B2B marketers make when targeting leads?

Jones: A lot of B2B marketers are over-targeting. They assume who the buyers are instead of letting the data tell them. If it's clear someone is researching a product or service, why wouldn't you want to talk to them? They're raising their hand; you can't ignore them because they aren't at the C-level.

There are about six to 10 people involved in a B2B purchase and even more influencers. Over-filtering will ensure you lose those contacts. When you think about it, you're essentially paying to exclude people you might need to influence to win business.

Meeting your buyers on their terms means meeting them in the places and formats they prefer when they're doing product research. Too many marketers aren't thinking that way.

I think more marketers should be using intent data to find lookalike accounts. You shouldn't limit your target accounts. There are similar organizations out there showing the same signals, and there's no good reason to exclude them from your target account list. It's an easy way to expand your potential customer base.

DGR: What do the most successful B2B marketing programs have in common?

Jones: The best programs are marrying insight and engagement tools with their demand gen efforts. This increases your visibility into what your accounts and buyers are doing and allows you to take meaningful action.

In the old way of marketing, you identified when a person had a problem because they acted. Today, you can use insights to see when they took an action and understand what problems they will face in the future. Then, you can educate them on the next problem, reaching them before they even realize they need to have that conversation.

As a marketer, once you have this level of insight, you are better equipped to deliver the right message at the right time to your prospects instead of delivering a one-size-fits-all message that won't resonate.

It's not hard to get a name or an email from a form fill. The best B2B marketers have the visibility to know what to say and when; that's how you create demand.

DGR: What should marketers look for when they evaluate marketing partners and tools for a partnership?

Jones: I would look at how many ways you can reach your audience when you work with a specific vendor, including the omnichannel approaches the vendor offers and its ability to meet buyers on their own terms. Not everyone on that buying committee downloads papers or attends online events. Some will prefer unbiased third-party content over vendor content, while others want a demo. You need to work with a vendor that has options for different types of engagement.

You should also take a close look at the vendor's audience. But this isn't just a matter of job titles and roles. Is it an audience that is actively researching and evaluating products? Is the vendor providing quality content on relevant topics to help them overcome the complexity I mentioned earlier?

And lastly, a vendor that can deliver insights about your prospects is also key. Beyond names and email addresses, insights are the key to successful B2B marketing programs from this point forward.

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ZACH JONES, TECHNOLOGYADVICE



ENGAGING THE ENTIRE BUYING GROUP WITH CREDIBILITY & COMMUNITY

A typical buying group for a complex B2B solution involves **six to 10 decision makers**. While specific digital channels are finding success with individual B2B buyers, it can be complicated when there are a larger, more diverse buying committees.

"It's not a linear journey anymore," explained Zach Jones, Chief Revenue Officer at B2B media services company **TechnologyAdvice**. "Everybody in the buying committee is doing different things at different times. What we're seeing is that you must find all the channels where your buyers are doing their research across the buying committee. And you have to be able to engage with all of them."

When engaging with those buying committees, it's important to understand the assets they're looking for: **54% of decision makers** say they spend more than one hour per week reading and reviewing thought leadership content, while **82% of marketers** reported actively using content marketing in 2021.

"Prospects want to hear from someone that's credible," said Go-to-Market Pros' Phelan. "Have your customers tell their story or bring an analyst to the table to talk about what they've heard from people in the market. A lot of B2B marketing is, in essence, about creating credibility."

With so much noise and clutter out there, it makes sense that marketers are witnessing positive responses to authenticity.

"I don't react to what looks like a cut-and-paste," said Phelan. "There are all these foreign companies that people hired to take over their profiles, and they're just messaging out to thousands of people every day trying to get somebody to respond."

In reaction to that lack of authenticity – and perhaps in reaction to the isolation and uncertainty of the past two years – marketers are seeing greater value in shared experiences.

“Community, to me, is one of the key channels that came out of this,” said SurePoint’s Flocchini. “I truly believe it’s because of the situation we were in – this sense of learning from one another; the sense of belonging and togetherness that communities create. And I think community has become a key part of brand awareness and lead gen strategy.”

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**MICHAEL PHELAN,
GO-TO-MARKET PROS.**





LEVERAGING DIRECT MAIL EARLY IN THE BUYER'S JOURNEY

The rise of community, shared experiences and humanized connections has led to a resurgence in an old channel: Direct mail. Some theorize that direct mail is an antidote to digital fatigue while others suggest that it's simply refreshing to have something tangible and real.

"We used to think of direct mail as very cold, but there's something personal about it now and it's not just a piece of digital media," said Carey Straetz, Head of Demand Generation at Mode. "My best example of gifting was a BDR who found my Instagram and learned that my husband and I love to play board games. So, he sent me a role-play board game that was in line with what I had posted and I was like, 'Oh, I've got to take this guy's call — just because.'"

While only **55% of Baby Boomers** have a positive impression of direct mail, 77% of Millennials and Gen Z consumers like to receive direct mail. As generational preferences evolve, so do marketers' sending strategies across different stages of the buyer's journey.

"I think we're going to see a big rise — and I already am seeing it — of direct mail and delivering those personalized messages," said Flocchini. "It used to be that you might send a gift or engage someone with direct mail later in the funnel. Right now, I'm seeing very early on people engaging someone in the funnel, right in greeting."



CONCLUSION

2022 promises to be another year full of disruption and innovation. Marketers can look forward to B2B buyers returning to live events while continuing the pandemic practice of virtual events and online lead generation. To combat this isolation and disconnection, strategies continue to emerge that appeal to prospects on a more direct, personal and human level.

From personalized gifts and direct mail to online community events and individualized outreach over social media, there are many new channels for lead generation.

“The state of lead generation in 2022 is three things: Community, experience and the voice of the customer,” said Flocchini. “That’s the way to think of every channel and what you’re doing.”



At TechnologyAdvice, we pride ourselves on helping B2B tech buyers manage the complexity and risk of the buying process. We are a trusted source of information for tech buyers, delivering advice and facilitating connections between buyers and the world's leading sellers of business technology.

Established in 2006 in our founder's dorm room, we continue to expand. In 2021 we acquired TechRepublic, and in 2020, we acquired QuinStreet B2B, both leading resources for IT and business decision makers. These acquisitions included global teams of technology and media professionals to enhance our presences in the US, the UK, Singapore, and Australia.

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Demand Gen Report is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multi-channel demand generation efforts.

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